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17 May 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of Meeting of the Special Group, 17 May 1962

PRESENT: General Taylor; Mr. Johnson; Mr. McCone; Mr. William Bundy and General Lemnitzer

Outer Space

Mr. Carl Kaysen joined the Group for this discussion.

General Taylor called the Group's attention to the letter from Dr. Killian, addressed to the President, dated 16 May 1962, on the subject of our policy with respect to satellites. General Taylor said that this letter basically states that the United States must formulate a clear position with respect to the relationship of reconnaissance satellites to our stand on peaceful uses of outer space; that the President should review and approve the position of this Government on these matters; and that key representatives involved in international discussions of these topics should be briefed on essential elements of the reconnaissance program.

Mr. Johnson pointed out that all pertinent position papers had been cleared within the Government and that this had been doubly assured by asking the principals of the Special Group to verify for themselves that all essential interests had been taken into consideration. The suggestion was then made that a possible gap existed with respect to the Committee of Principals, in its disarmament discussions. Mr. Johnson said that he thought the key to bridging any such gap is the overlapping of membership between the Committee of Principals and such committees as the Special Group itself.

Mr. Johnson also distributed a coordinated contingency paper covering the position the U.S. should take should the Soviets introduce a resolution to ban reconnaissance activities in outer space. He also said that arrangements had been made for a Colonel from the Defense Department who is knowledgable of these programs to be attached to the committee which will discuss legal aspects of outer space in the UN forum.

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NRO review(s) completed.

NSC review(s) completed.

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The necessity of clearing certain key individuals having to do with disarmament, the United Nations, etc., was acknowledged. The suggestion was made that for this purpose a full KH-type clearance would not be required, but that perhaps some sort of administrative clearance could be arranged with the idea of telling such individuals only that an extensive reconnaissance satellite program is in being and that the results are of great value to the U.S.

It was agreed that, as an immediate response to the Killian letter, State, coordinating with Defense and CIA, should draft a letter for the President to send to Dr. Killian. This would be accompanied by a covering memorandum, explaining for the President's information exactly what the status of coordination on these matters is. Mr. Kaysen suggested that it might be of interest to the President to see the recent paper, prepared for the Special Group by the CIA, on the subject of Soviet knowledge of US reconnaissance programs, as well as the contingency paper just distributed by Mr. Johnson. Mr. Kaysen urged that in consideration of this entire matter, urgent attention be given also to looking ahead to establishing a coordinated U.S. position in support of our stand on the legitimacy of reconnaissance activities in outer space.

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Thomas A. Parrott

Distribution
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Gilpatric
Mr. McCone
Mr. Kaysen
General Taylor

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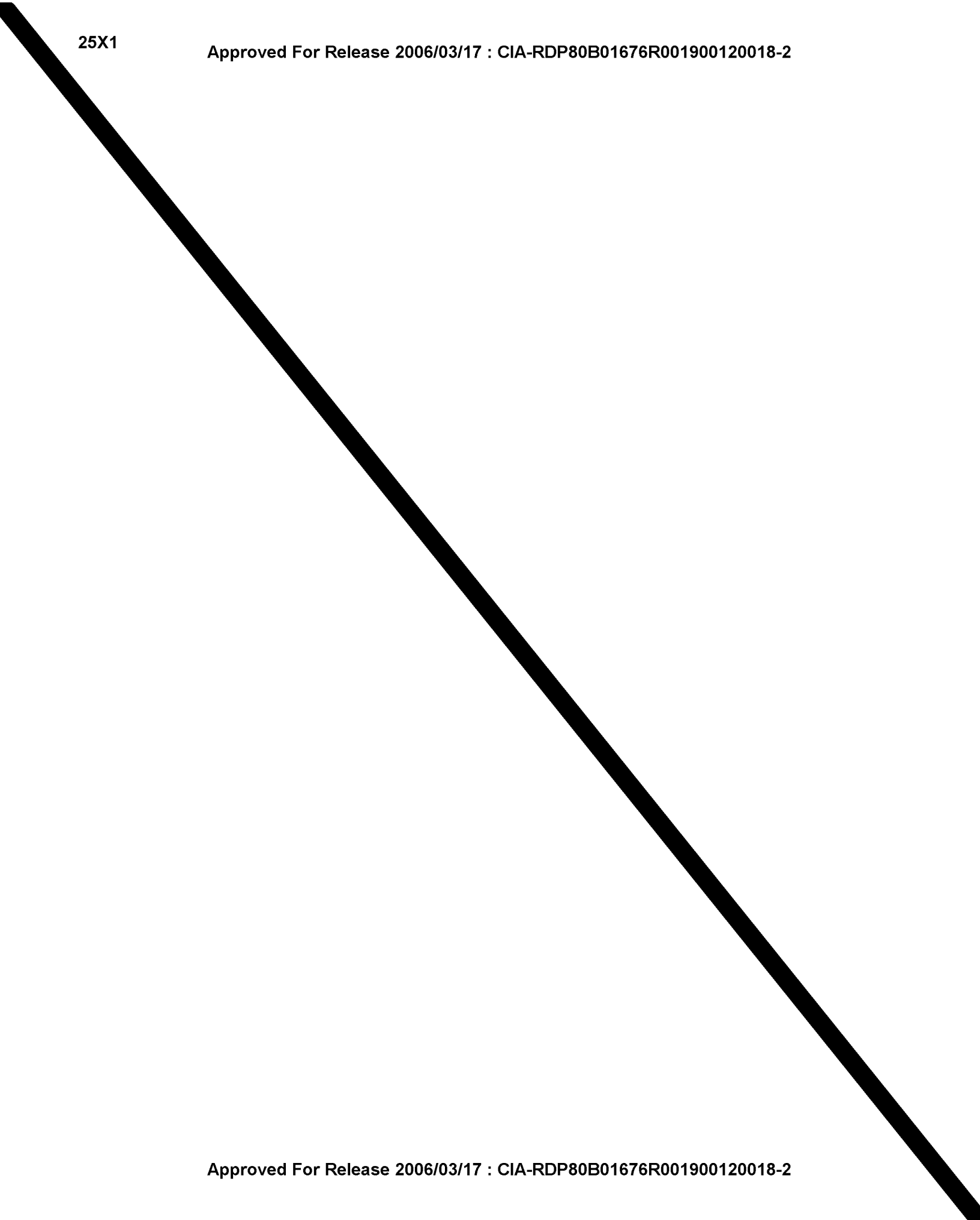

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